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City Hall Construction Project Forces Entrance Closure

The main entrance to City Hall has been closed until sometime in October due to a construction project in the center of the building. For access to the Development Services Dept., or City Clerk's office, visitors should continue to use the north entrance. For access to any other departments, visitors should use the employee entrance on the south side of the building.

For access to the Utilities Office, customers should continue to use the Utilities entrance on E. Dallas.

This latest renovation project by the City's Building Maintenance staff will result in a more convenient, modern lobby area and more office space for the staff of City Manager Jim Twombly.

(See **ENTRANCE**, next page)

Moo On, Cow. You're Not A Code Violation!

High grass and weeds, trash, inoperable vehicles in yards or driveways...and noisy cows. Those are but a few of the possible ordinance violations investigated by Broken Arrow's two busy Code Enforcement Officers, Gary Arnold and Paul Bighorse.

Fifteen-year City employee Arnold, who has spent most of that time at his present job, says he really enjoys the work. "It's got variety and challenge," Gary states, "I never know what I'll be checking out. Some other common violations are dismantled vehicles, trailers parked in front of building lines, and signs in the right of way."

"We base our ordinances on Oklahoma State Statutes," he continued.

"They're designed to help keep the community attractive, prevent health and safety hazards, and enhance property values. Nobody wants to live next to a house where the yard has weeds two feet tall, or a junk car up on blocks."

Signs of all types, from large commercial ones to the cheap wire and plastic kind that proliferate along side the streets, are also a code officer's responsibility. "It's a lot better in Broken Arrow now than it was a few years ago," he said, "but we're glad when the elections are over. New signs are put out by the hundreds every weekend, faster than we can remove them."

"Does anyone give you a bad time when you give them a citation?" I asked.

"Rarely," Gary said. "Most people want to do the right thing, but they just don't know the ordinances. We approach them with a non-threatening manner, and if they will work with us to correct the problem, we'll work with them. We only write 10 to 15 citations a month, and most folks mow, clean up, or resolve it quickly."

"But, I have been told once that I would leave in a body bag if I wrote a citation," he said, "so I went back to write it with the other code officer plus a uniformed police officer. The violator calmed down. We have had cases where the City went in to clean up a violation site and the cleanup crew took one or more police officers along because of the attitude of the violator."

"Really severe code violations?" he said. "Well, there was one house where the occupant moved out but left three or four big dogs inside, and then went back to feed them at night. The dogs messed up the house terribly, then roaches began to multiply in the place, and the roaches started migrating to the neighbors' homes. We had to get a court order to get in, take the dogs, and get the house fumigated."

"We've also had a person who was trying to run a salvage business from a residence, and kept a large dumpster in the driveway. They would bring in truckloads of old furniture and other stuff at night, sort through it, put some in the dumpster, some on the curb, and I guess sell the better items somewhere."

He also advised that if a citizen has a complaint about potholes, mosquitoes, or similar problems, they should call the Action Center at 258-3587, and not Code Enforcement.

What about the noisy cows? Gary says right after he started, a woman who had bought a lot and built a home at the edge of pasture (yes, we still have a few of those in the city limits) called to ask the code inspectors to make the cows in the pasture stop mooing. It seems that the bovines were not so quaint and rustic while she was watching her house being built were not so adorable when they began their loud early morning vocalizing of the need to be milked. Arnold had to advise her that there was no ordinance prohibiting a cow in a properly zoned agricultural property from talking to her sisters.

Most of us never see Gary or Paul, but they are two nice guys who spend each day quietly doing their jobs to ensure a better quality of life for all of us.

AND THE WEEDS KEEP GROWING... Gary Arnold (left) and Paul Bighorse wade through very high weeds to check the notice on the door of a residence which has been targeted for code violations. Every effort is made to contact owners of such properties and allow them to get the work done so that they are in compliance. If that is not done within a certain length of time, the City does the work and bills the owner of the property.



DON'T BOTH-
ER CLIMBING THE
STEPS -- The main entrance to City Hall will be closed until sometime in October due to construction projects in the building.

BA Makes Magazine List of Best Places To Live in USA

MONEY Magazine has announced its 2006 list of the "Best Places to Live in America", and Broken Arrow is the only city from northeastern Oklahoma to make the Top 90, coming in at No. 66.

Starting with an initial list of 745 places that have populations above 50,000, MONEY's team of editors and writers undertook several months of research, reviewing data on a wide range of economic and quality-of-life indicators.

Working with data provider Onboard of New York City and consultant Bert Sperling of BestPlaces.net, MONEY's team narrowed the list and then visited cities across the country, interviewing residents, community leaders and local officials before compiling the final rankings.

Ft. Collins, Colo., was ranked No. 1 on the list, followed by Naperville, Ill., and Sugar Land, Tx. Overland Park and Olathe, both Kansas suburbs (See LIST, Next Page)



IVR System Gives Utility Customers New Options

City of Broken Arrow utility customers now have more options than ever before in accessing their accounts and paying their bills, thanks to the implementation of the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system. It's the latest in a series of changes made by the City to make doing business more convenient for its customers.

Customers calling the Utility Office, 259-8409, are greeted by the IVR system. By using their utility account number, they may check on account information such as billing, payments, and account balances. They may also use a credit card to enter a payment. During regular business hours of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, customers may also speak directly with customer service personnel. The IVR system is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Cashiers are also available for walk-up window service at both the south end of City Hall at the Utility Office and at the One-Stop Center on the north end (200 S. First).

Customers who would like to make payments without leaving their vehicle may do so at the Drop Box in the parking lot on the northeast corner of Dallas and First Street. Any payments made with check or money order may be placed in this box. Utility personnel make pickups at the box several times daily. Payments received by mail are posted on the same day they arrive.

Electronic payment options continue to increase for utility customers. The "Click-2 Gov" system has been available for some time through the City's website, www.brokenarrowok.gov. A link is provided from the Home Page to options for doing business with the City online. Customers need only their "pin" number, which

is located on the lower left corner of their monthly statement. With that number they may go online to access their utility account and check on the account history, billing, payments, usage, due dates and balance.

Payments made by credit card through this system will be posted immediately.

Automatic Bank Drafting is another option for customers. They will be mailed a standard bill each month, but the customer's bank account will be drafted for the amount due on the due date. Forms for starting that plan are also available through the City's website.



TALKING WITH BROKEN ARROW -- City Council Member Tom Chatterton (center) visits with some of the citizens who attended the Let's Talk, Broken Arrow forum at the South Library in July. This was the third in the series of forums, with another coming to Ward Four this fall.

Semifinalist...

BAPD Leadership Team Selected for High Honor

Broken Arrow Police Chief Todd Wuestewald has been notified that the BAPD Leadership Team has been selected as one of 25 semifinalists for the Webber-Seavey Award for Quality in Law Enforcement. Hundreds of programs applied for the recognition. The 25 semifinalists will be hosted in Boston at the Annual International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) Conference in October, where 10 finalists will be named. Three winning agencies will be selected from those finalists, and will be publicly announced at the Boston conference. No other agencies from Oklahoma made the list. In judging the applications, the IACP Awards Committee ranked the projects on project selection, analysis techniques, solutions, results, institutionalization and submission.

Entrance.....

(Continued from Page One)

The Human Resource office, which was in that part of the facility, is now located in the City Hall Annex, across the street (on the east side of First Street).

Parking is provided along the south side of the Annex Building near the southeast entrance for those visiting the Human Resources Office.

These projects are part of a master plan designed to make it easier for residents, developers and visitors to find the people and services they need. Renovations in both City Hall and the Annex have provided more space and better offices for City workers.

The recently-completed south end of City Hall, designed for the Utilities Department, will be used as the entrance for those wishing to see the City Manager and his staff, City Attorney, Engineering and Construction, Finance and the Fire Chief and Fire Marshals.

The north entrance, adjacent to City Council Chambers, will continue to be used for the One-Stop Center, Development Services, the City Clerk and those attending Council meetings.

In addition to Human Resources, the Annex is home to Employee Safety and Risk Management and Public Information.

By using City personnel for engineering and construction on renovation projects over the past few years, there has been a savings of several thousand dollars for Broken Arrow taxpayers.

Community Calendar

Aug. 16 -- Last day of the 2006 swimming season for Country Aire pool. The Family Aquatic Center will be open Aug. 16, then open only on Saturdays and Sundays, 1 p.m. to 6 p.m., through Labor Day, Sept. 4.

Aug. 19 -- Chamber of Commerce Fall Expo 06, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Community Center in Central Park. Applications for those wishing to have exhibition space are available on line at www.brokenarrow.org.

Sept. 8, 9 and 10 -- The John Q. Hammons Hotel Classic, PGA tournament at Cedar Ridge Country Club in Broken Arrow.

Sept. 11 -- Third Annual Blue Star Mothers Golf Tournament. Proceeds of the tournament will be used for programs to support, encourage and motivate our military troops through the projects of the Blue Star Mothers. Battle Creek Golf Course, with a registration fee deadline of Sept. 6. Fee is \$60 per person, with group rates available. Fee includes green fees, cart, golf range balls, gift bag and lunch. Limit to 144 first players registered. A 4-man scramble format. For more information contact Sharon Adams, 798-6837.

Sept. 15 -- Annual Broken Arrow Neighbors Wine Tasting, featuring Grady Nichols and participating restaurants and wine vendors. At the Tulsa Area Homebuilders Association building, from 5:30 to 8 p.m. For information call 313-9051. Proceeds benefit BAN programs.

Sept. 16 -- Annual Wolf Creek Neighborhood Garage Sale. All day at participating homes in the Wolf Creek addition, between South Aspen and Fir, and between West Washington and New Orleans.

Sept. 30 -- 2006 Miss Broken Arrow Scholarship Pageant. This is a qualifier for the 2007 Miss Oklahoma and Miss America pageants. Held once again at the North Intermediate High School auditorium.

Sept. 30 -- The Heart of Broken Arrow Arts and Crafts Fair at the Community Center in Central Park, 1500 S. Main. Sponsored by the Main Street Merchants Association, working with the City's Parks & Recreation Department. For information on booths call Darlene at 251-1591.

List...

(Continued from Page One)

were ranked 6th and 13th, respectively, while the top Texas cities included Plano (11), Richardson (15) and Carrollton (19). Norman was the only Oklahoma city in the Top 50, coming in at No.40.

Among the top factors by those polled in choosing a city in which to live were employment opportunities, good schools and low crime rates. Broken Arrow has been rated Oklahoma's safest city (based on FBI crime statistics) each of the past two years.



READY FOR FOOTBALL -- The Nienhuis Park Football fields have added goal posts, scoreboards and lots of green grass as the City prepares to host Broken Arrow Youth Football tackle leagues starting in August. This will be the first time the young gridders have had fields of their own, thanks to voter approval of a bond issue project.